G BK 459.130 Business Strategy (online)
Fall 2014 (25 Aug – 12 Dec)
Syllabus Version 3.0 (25 Aug 2014)

I. Instructor and Course Access

Instructor:	Dr. Brad Almond
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Office Fax:	254-501-5825
E-mail address:	brad.almond@tamuct.edu, or through Blackboard messaging
Department:	Marketing and Management
Office Secretary:	Christine Garza, Founders Hall 318 254-519-5437, cobainfo@tamuct.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays 1 – 4 pm (appointments recommended)
Teaching Assistant:	Leticia Togba
TA Contact Info:	e-mail: ltogba@tamuct.edu cell: 254-630-0704 (use sparingly) Leticia may also be contacted through Blackboard email.

Mode of instruction and course access:

This course is an online course that utilizes TAMUCT's Blackboard Learn™ system for all course communications and administration, including testing, assignment submission, and communications. The course Blackboard page may be accessed at https://tamuct.blackboard.com/.

Students should log into Blackboard using your MyCT Username and password:

- Your Blackboard Username is your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT e-mail address)
- Your Blackboard Password is your MyCT password

Blackboard login instructions are also given on the right-hand side of the page of the above URL.

To ensure timely and reliable communication (e.g., if I have to be unavailable to the class temporarily), I recommend that you change your default email address in Blackboard to whatever email address you actually check on a regular basis. To do this, click on the triangle that appears to the right of your name in the upper-right corner of the Blackboard screen. At the bottom of the window that opens, click Settings. Click the link for "Personal Information." Click "Edit Personal Information." Change your email address under "1. Personal Information" and click "Submit."

For this course, you will need reliable and frequent access to a computer with Internet access. If you do not have frequent and reliable access to a computer with Internet connection, or if your computer skills (opening, modifying, and saving files; Web browsing, etc.) are weak, please consider taking the course in a face-to-face format or else dropping the course and re-enrolling after you have received additional computing training sufficient for a fully online learning format. I am unable to provide computer training in this course aside from that which is directly related to course objectives.

UNILERT
Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas

UNILERT is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University—Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in UNILERT through their myCT email account. Connect at www.TAMUCT.edu/UNILERT to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in UNILERT, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.
(*statement updated Fall 2014*)

II. Summary Course Description:

This is a writing-intensive capstone course involving the integration of concepts and principles studied in accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing, quantitative methods, and other relevant business disciplines. It includes aspects relating to both creative and technical problem solving / business decision making. It is designed to be taken by senior business majors during their last semester, but may be taken earlier if the necessary prerequisites have already been completed (see next section).

III. Prerequisites:

Unless they have received permission from the appropriate department head or faculty member, students must complete the following courses before taking this class: ACC 204, FIN 301, G B 311, MGMT 301, and MKTG 314.

IV. Expanded Course Description:

GB 459 is a challenging capstone course that focuses on how firms formulate, implement, evaluate, and present strategies through written case study analysis, oral presentations and a computer-based business simulation. The course centers on the theme that a company achieves sustained success if and only if its managers (1) have an astute, timely strategic game plan for running the company, and (2) implement and execute the plan with proficiency. This course allows students to explore in-depth how

and why a well-conceived and well-executed strategy nearly always enhances a company's long-term performance.

This course also gives students the opportunity to integrate much of the knowledge they have gained in their business curriculum to date—marketing, accounting, management, finance, and so on. This is a "big picture" course. The problems and issues surrounding the tasks of crafting and implementing strategy cover the whole spectrum of business and management. Many variables and situational factors must be dealt with at once. Weighing the pros and cons of one strategic option versus another entails a total enterprise perspective and good judgment about how all of the relevant factors combine to shape what actions need to be taken.

Strategy involves the careful consideration of current and past contextual and organizational factors as well as an imaginative and prospective consideration of what future alternatives are possible to realize. As such, this course requires students to be somewhat "ambi-brained." In other words, this course requires the use of both the logical/analytic and the visual/creative hemispheres of the brain.

Finally, this is a WRITING INTESTIVE (WI) course. WI courses are intended to foster the development of communication skills needed for effective participation in the (business) world. Effective communication (written, verbal and nonverbal) is a highly valued and marketable skill in any field. Surveys have shown that the ability to communicate well is ranked by business executives as first among the personal factors necessary for promotion. This course will focus on continuous improvement in written language. Please note that although this course has an official writing intensive designation, oral communication skills will also be emphasized and evaluated (see details below).

Please note that each student must pass the writing component of a WI course in order to pass the course, regardless of his or her performance on all other course components.

V. Intended Student Outcomes / Learning Objectives:

GENERAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By engaging in the specific course elements described below in section VII of this syllabus, students will develop in each of the following general cognitive and practical skill areas:

A. **Analogical thinking.** Analogical thinking involves the application of terms and conceptual models to specific—and especially new—contexts.
B. **Analytical thinking.** Analytical thinking involves the careful consideration of data in an attempt to answer diagnostic-type questions such as, "What is happening here?" "How do these facts all relate to each other?" and "What does it all mean?" Analytical thinking is the bedrock of decision-making: it is only after engaging in analytic thinking that one should begin to ask the questions, "is this good or bad?" and "what should I do?"
C. **Integrative thinking.** Integrative thinking involves the application of multiple conceptual or disciplinary frameworks to a single problem or scenario.
D. **Imaginative and creative thinking.** Imaginative and creative thinking involves the identification, articulation, and realization of novel and hitherto unarticulated possibilities. This sort of thinking may also include the three types of thinking described above.

E. **Learning-by-reading.** Learning-by-reading is a cognitive skill involving the active mental acquisition, storage, organization, and retrieval of thoughts and ideas that have been disseminated in a print medium.
F. **Written communication.** Written communication is a skill involving the coherent and compelling expression of (typically one's own) thoughts and ideas (which are often derived or synthesized from the thoughts and ideas of others) through written language.
G. **Spoken communication.** Spoken communication is a skill involving the coherent and compelling expression of one's own thoughts and ideas through spoken language.
H. **Collaboration.** Collaboration is the skill of cooperatively engaging in one or more of the above mental or practical tasks with one or more other people. It involves a particular set of organizing, coordinating, and communicating skills that are not required when working alone.

SPECIFIC COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. **COURSE INTRODUCTION:** In this section of the course, students will demonstrate their understanding of the overall design of the course, the specific course components involved, and the foundational terms upon which the course will build.
   - **1.1.** Students will read the contents of this course syllabus.
   - **1.2.** Students will navigate and correctly utilize the course Blackboard page.
   - **1.3.** Students will identify the necessary elements for completing a case study analysis in this class (in preparation for completing a case study in later course modules).
   - **1.4.** Students will identify the terms and procedures from the Participant's Guide for the Glo-bus™ strategy simulation (in preparation for participation in the simulation).
   - **1.5.** Students will define and describe the terms *strategy* and *the strategic management process*.
   - **1.6.** Students will define and correctly utilize the vision, mission, and values framework.
2. **STRATEGIC ANALYSIS (Strategy Module 1): Students will define the terms, describe the frameworks, and engage in the process of strategic analysis.**
   - **2.1.** Students will define the components of external environment analysis, and conduct an external environment analysis for a real company.
     - **2.1.1.** Students will define and describe the components of the general environment, and conduct an analysis of the general environment of a real company.
     - **2.1.2.** Students will define and describe the components of the competitive environment, and conduct an analysis of the competitive environment of a real industry.
     - **2.1.3.** Students will define and describe the strategic groups framework, and conduct a strategic groups analysis for a real industry.
   - **2.2.** Students will define the components of internal environment analysis, and conduct an internal analysis for a real company.
     - **2.2.1.** Students will identify the components and distinctive features of the value chain analysis framework, and conduct a value chain analysis of both a firm and an industry.
     - **2.2.2.** Students will identify the components and distinctive features of the resource-based view of the firm, and conduct a resource analysis for a real firm.
3. **STRATEGIC FORMULATION (Strategy Module 2): Students will identify the principles and processes of formulating strategy, and will formulate a strategy for a real company.**
   - **3.1.** Students will identify the distinctive features of business-level cost leadership, differentiation, focus, and combination strategies, and create a set of strategic alternatives for a real company based on these strategies. Students will also implement one or more of these strategies as part of a course strategy simulation.

3.2. Students will identify different varieties of corporate diversification and the relative risks and benefits inherent in each.
3.3. Students will identify components of entrepreneurial strategy and competitive dynamics.

4. **STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION (Strategy Module 3): Students will define the terms and principles of strategic implementation, and will develop a strategic implementation plan for a real company.**
   4.1. Students will identify types and principles of strategic controls and corporate governance, and demonstrate these principles as part of a strategic implementation plan for a real company.
   4.2. Students will identify types and distinctive features of different organization structure types.
   4.3. Students will identify the qualities, dimensions, and paradoxes of innovation and the basic principles involved in managing it.

VI. Course Materials

Required Texts:

- Dess, Lumpkin, Eisner, and McNamara (2014). Strategic Management: text and cases, 7th Ed., McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York. The ISBN for this title 978-0-07-786252-7.

  Please note that the cover of this version of the text has a picture of three rocks on a gray background, and that earlier editions of this textbook may NOT be used in this course.

  Note: students are not under any obligation to purchase their textbooks or other course materials from a university-affiliated bookstore. The above-named textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer or textbook rental service. International versions of this text, while having a lower print quality and being more difficult to procure, may be legally purchased by students in the U.S. for a fraction of the cost of the American version of the text.

  It is also possible to RENT a textbook, including e-textbooks (which are downloaded as PDFs). www.chegg.com has a nice feature that allows students who have ordered paper copies of their texts (either for purchase or for rent) to read PDF versions of a text for up to 7 days while they wait for their paper copy to arrive by mail. This is especially attractive for 8-week courses, where it is not practicable to wait several days for a text to arrive.

Additional Required Materials:

- All students are required to purchase a 1-semester user license for the Glo-bus™ business strategy simulation. Licenses must be purchased directly from the Glo-bus™ website: www.glo-bus.com. Prices change periodically, but recent license fees have been about $45 per student. Your course teaching assistant will contact you during the first week of the semester with the registration code you will need to purchase your license. This code will ensure that you are enrolled in the correct section of Glo-bus™.

Required Technology Resources:

- For this course, **you will need reliable and frequent access to a computer and to the Internet**. If you do not have frequent and reliable access to a computer with Internet connection, or if your computer skills are weak, you should drop this course and take it instead in a face-to-face format.

This course will use the TAMU-CT Blackboard Learn™ learning management system for many class communications, content distribution, and assessments. Login instructions for Blackboard are given on page 1 of this syllabus.

Blackboard supports the most common operating systems:
PC: Windows 7, Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 2000,
Mac: Mac OS 10.6 "Snow Leopard®", Mac OS 10.5 "Leopard®", Mac OS 10.4 "Tiger®"

PLEASE check your browser and computer compatibility by following the small "Check My Browser" link on the upper-right side of the TAMU-CT Blackboard logon page (http://tamuct.blackboard.com). This is a CRITICAL step as these settings are important for when you take an exam or submit an assignment.

Upon logging on to Blackboard Learn™, you will see a link to "Blackboard Student Orientation" under the "My Courses" tab. Click on that link and study the materials in this orientation course. This orientation course will help get students who are new to online education or to the Blackboard environment get up to speed quickly. There is also a link to Blackboard Help from inside the course on the left-hand menubar. As needed, the first week of the course may include activities and assignments that will help you get up to speed with navigation, sending and receiving messages and discussion posts, and submitting an assignment. Your ability to function within the Blackboard system will facilitate your success in this course.

Technology issues are not an excuse for missing a course requirement – make sure your computer is configured correctly and address issues well in advance of deadlines.

Blackboard Technical Support

For technological or computer issues, especially those related to Blackboard, students should contact Help Desk Central at any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu
Phone: (254) 519-5466
Web Chat: http://hdc.tamu.edu

When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

- You will also need **access to Microsoft Word™** (or another compatible word processing program such as OpenOffice Writer™) and **a program that allows you to view PDFs**. Adobe offers a free PDF reader at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html. Most computers are already equipped with this application.

VII. Course Requirements

GENERAL BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES: While engaged in the pursuit of each the General and Specific Course Learning Objectives listed in Section V above, each student must:

- **Demonstrate PROFESSIONAL INITIATIVE** at all times by taking responsibility for one's own performance in the course, as well as for any opportunities one may be able to take to enhance the course for others. This should be demonstrated vis-à-vis course assignment details, course deadlines (and personal time management, generally), contributions to groupwork, use of required course technology, and the anticipation and competent management of contingencies relating to oneself and to others that may affect one's performance in the course (e.g., job, family, other courses).
- **Demonstrate PROFESSIONAL COURTESY** at all times by maintaining a professional tone in all communication with all persons involved with this course: peers, professor, teaching assistant, etc. This includes any communication that may involve reporting interpersonal conflict, engaging in discussions or disputes, or giving / responding to negative feedback. Professional courtesy also includes a commitment to listening well, and to engaging in meaningful dialogue where other parties are given ample opportunity to contribute to the discussion or assignment at hand without fear of disruption, retribution, or unwarranted criticism. Finally, it also includes common courtesies such as letting group members know in advance if you going to be unavailable for a scheduled meeting, or if you are going to miss an agreed-upon deadline due to an unforeseen disruption.
- **Demonstrate PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY** at all times by complying with all guidelines and restrictions regarding the completion of student work, the use of external sources, the general compliance with the TAMUCT academic integrity policy, and the giving of specific, accurate, and timely peer performance evaluation.
- **Demonstrate a commitment to PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** at all times by reading, comprehending, integrating, and applying all textbook and other reading materials to all course assignments and activities (as measured by exams, cases, simulation, etc.), and by successfully completing all assignments and activities to the best of one's abilities at the present time.
- **Demonstrate PROFESSIONAL MATURITY** at all times by accepting the circumstances under which one has chosen to attempt to complete this course, and by accepting the evaluation of one's work by one's peers and/or instructor without complaining or resorting to irrelevant appeals (e.g., "this could hurt my GPA," "I was really busy," etc.). This is notwithstanding any exceptional situations in which a student is able to provide written documentation that a legitimate, objective evaluation error has been made, or in which normal evaluation policy should be set aside because of a documented emergency.

Course Communication Guidelines

Information Repository: The course Blackboard page will contain a course schedule and list of all assignments, web links to research and other information, individual student exam and assignment grades (secure for each student), and other information useful to this course. Each student should check this page every day for the first week of class, and at least once per week after that to be sure you he or she is current with requirements for this course.

Late Submissions/Resubmissions: Except in documented emergencies (e.g., unexpected military commitments, hospitalizations, funerals), late work will not be accepted after the due date posted on Blackboard. Revised due dates will be created upon request from your instructor on a case-by-case basis, and are not guaranteed. A due date extension will not be permitted without official written documentation of the emergency in question—no exceptions. Documentation may be brought to class or scanned and emailed / faxed using the instructor contact information on page 1 of this syllabus.

How to submit work: Assignments will generally be submitted through Blackboard in the Assignments area by following the prompts given. Please submit all written assignments in Word or PDF formats only. Any documents I send to you or post to Blackboard will be in PDF format. The easiest way to convert a Word file to PDF is to "Save As," then under the "Save as type" menu select *PDF*. If your word processor does not already contain a PDF converter (most do), a free PDF creator may be downloaded from the following URL: http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator/.

E-mail Guidelines:
I will do my best to check my Blackboard messages at least daily during the work week. I also regularly my TAMUCT e-mail (brad.almond@tamuct.edu) several times a day during the workweek, and occasionally on weekends. Note that I cannot guarantee immediate replies to student e-mails. Please do not expect to have immediate and continual contact with me. However, in most cases I will e-mail responses back within 24 hours unless it is over the weekend or I am out of town. If you have not heard from me via email within this time limit, or if you have an emergency, you may send me a text at 254-339-3190. Please send texts sparingly, and always include your name and the name of this course in your text (since I won't recognize your number). Please note that you are not to contact me for technical support, and that I normally will NOT respond to texts directly. Texts are only meant to gently alert me or remind me that you have an unanswered or urgent email that needs a response.

Specific Grade Components

Your final grade in this course will be calculated based on a weighted average of your examinations, case analyses, the web-based strategy simulation game, and class participation. Note that some of your assignment grades may include a peer-evaluation component.

Exams
There will be three (3) exams covering the chapters in the text and any supplemental readings you may have been assigned. Each exam may be taken twice, but note that a second attempt will NOT contain exactly the same questions as the first attempt. A technology failure during test time counts as an attempt. Blackboard will keep the higher of the two scores. None of these exams will be comprehensive. All exams will be taken online within the Blackboard environment and will be graded as quickly as possible. If the exam is fully multiple choice it will be graded automatically by Blackboard, and grades will be available to students once the testing period ends. If the exam includes short answer or

essay questions, grades will not be posted until your professor manually grades these items (usually within 1-2 days). Each exam will count 10% of your final grade. The length and formatting of each exam will be posted on Blackboard, and your instructor reserves the right to change the format of an exam at his discretion to better meet pedagogical objectives. Students will only be allowed a limited window of time to complete exams, typically 90-120 minutes. Therefore, do not begin an exam unless you are sure you will have adequate time to complete it in one sitting without interruption. Even though exams are administered online and you will have the use of your textbook to assist you, *you still need to study to prepare for the exams*. You will not have nearly enough time to look every answer up in the textbook as you go along.

IMPORTANT: Although earlier versions of Blackboard allowed students to complete an exam as long as they began it before the due time, in the new version of Blackboard I am requiring that all exams be ***complete*** by the listed due time. Furthermore, I will make no allowances for claims of ignorance (i.e., "I forgot we had an exam") or of personal technical difficulties (lost Web connection, PC rebooted on its own, virus, etc.) where exams are concerned (even if the claims are legitimate)[1]. Consequently, I strongly recommend that you keep track of deadlines and NOT wait until the last minute to complete your exams. If you do, and something goes wrong with your computer, you are simply out of luck. You will have a 4-day window within which to complete your exams (Thursday through Sunday). I suggest taking the exams as early as possible within this 4-day window. This way if you do encounter a problem you have time to contact me or Blackboard technical support about it in time to do something about it before the exam window closes. Ultimately YOU are responsible for accessing and utilizing the technology you are using to complete this course. If you procrastinate you are only putting yourself at risk. Please plan accordingly.

Note: a student must have a passing average on the three exams to pass this course, regardless of his or her performance in all other course requirement areas.

Case Analyses

Students will work in groups on the case analyses. Students will self-select into groups in the designated sign-up area in Blackboard during the first week of class. The name of each group in the sign-up area will indicate which company the group will be responsible for analyzing. Each group will be responsible for preparing a series of case study analyses relating to this firm. There will be three (3) parts to the case analysis component in this class; each part will be completed in sequence according to the dates given in the schedule below. The three parts of the case analysis are:

1. Strategic profile, situation analysis, internal company analysis, and SWOT analysis
2. Strategic alternatives and choice and implementation plan
3. Oral presentation

Each part of the case analysis incorporates the work done in the previous parts. Once a part is submitted I will try to grade it and return it to you within 1 week so that your group can use my feedback to help you with the next section.

[1] The only exception here would be if Blackboard failed completely, in which case I would be notified and could re-set the exam.

The full details of each these assignments will be posted on Blackboard in the Assignments area. For additional guidance, please also see the supplemental files in the Case Analysis Files folder on Blackboard. These files are important—read them!

Note that groups have the option of "firing" underperforming group members who fail to communicate adequately with other group members, who miss deadlines set by the group, who commit some form of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, use of impermissible sources, etc.), who have a flippant, recalcitrant, abusive, or otherwise intolerable attitude toward other group members, who fail to complete their work on time or with sufficient quality, or some combination of these. Groups seeking to dismiss a member must first contact the instructor with documentation (email paper trails, work samples, details of phone conversations, etc.) and a clear rationale for the dismissal. If the instructor deems it beneficiary and in the best interest of the group to proceed with the dismissal, the instructor, not the group itself, will notify the dismissed group member directly. The dismissed group member will be permitted to look for a new group. Other groups in class are NOT obligated to allow fired students to join. If the fired student cannot find a new group he or she will have to complete the balance of the case analysis alone with an automatic letter grade reduction on the assignment. Please note that this is by nature a group assignment. Thus, individuals may NOT elect at the start of the semester to complete the case analysis on their own. Furthermore, if the same group member is dismissed from two different groups, he or she will automatically fail the course regardless of his or her performance on other course components. Note that being dismissed from a group only once does not guarantee a passing grade.

Please note that there is no minimum or maximum page limit for the case analyses individual parts. However, experience has shown that in the past most quality completed case study sections fall in the 8-15 page range, but some are longer than this. I have posted a sample case study from a past semester on Blackboard for reference, but please note that the nature and structure of this assignment has changed since this student work was done and thus this sample *should NOT be used as a template*. I will give guidance on typical page ranges for the individual case sections on Blackboard. Your case analyses not trivial exercises, and should not be treated as such. Do not be tempted be these page totals to think that more information means higher grades. There may be some historical correlation between case length and grade, but this does not mean that simply making a case longer without enhancing its quality will get you a better grade. It won't.

Please also note that the case study is the capstone assignment in your capstone class. As such, it is meant to be integrative of all of the material in this course, as well as concepts and analytic frameworks from your other core business courses—finance, accounting, marketing, etc. In this respect it functions much like a comprehensive final exam for this course (and for your undergraduate business degree). The total case analyses portion of the class accounts for 45% of the final grade in this course. Each of the 3 sections will count for 15% of the final grade.

A detailed outline of what each case analysis should include is given on the course Blackboard site. I have also included a detailed case study grade rubric (which I will use to evaluate your analyses) in the Appendix of this syllabus. As mentioned above, I have also posted several additional help files in the Case Analysis Files folder on Blackboard to guide your case study preparation. As they contain information which you are required to incorporate into your analyses, I highly recommend that you use them!

Class Participation / Professionalism: In general, professionalism consists of compliance with the General Behavioral Objectives listed above on pages 7 of this syllabus. This component of the course is yours to give away. Students who complete all course requirements without receiving any negative peer feedback will typically receive full credit for participation and professionalism.

As part of the participation component of this class, each student is required post a personal bio to the Discussions areas in Blackboard. Instructions for the personal bio will be given in the Weekly Schedule area in Blackboard. Further enhancements to your participation grade can be realized by other "X factor" means, such as (for example) offering exemplary contributions in class or online, or by posting interesting and relevant current news items to the discussions area to stimulate discussion. Students who work in groups but fail to submit an end-of-semester peer evaluation will lose participation points.

The class participation and professionalism component is worth 10% of your final grade in this course. This 10% will be broken down as follows:

- 2% personal bios
- 6% professionalism and in-class participation
- 2% X-factor

Any decrement to this grade resulting from negative peer evaluation will be in addition to any decrement that is applied to the specific assignment from which the negative peer evaluation was derived (e.g., case studies).

Business Strategy Game: In this course each student will individually take part in a competitive, computer-based business simulation. This component of the course will be administrated and monitored by your teaching assistant (see contact information on p. 1 of this syllabus), who will contact you during the first week of the semester with details and guidance. Your teaching assistant will also be available throughout the semester to help you with anything related to the simulation. Note that this portion of the course is administrated ENTIRELY by the teaching assistant, so you should direct any and all questions to him or her. The strategy simulation counts 15% of your final grade. Your performance in the simulation will be determined in the following manner. 10% of your final Glo-Bus grade will be based on a Quiz covering the information from the User's Manual for the simulation. The quiz is normally administered during the second or third week of the class (see schedule below). The remaining 90% of your Glo-Bus grade is based on the actual performance of your firm when the simulation ends. Firm performance is a function of your ongoing decision making within the simulated industry and competitive environment. There are five factors that determine the performance of your firm within the simulation. Each of these factors is weighted equally. These factors are:

- earnings per share
- return on equity
- credit rating
- image rating
- stock price

You will be able to track your performance on these metrics throughout the simulation within the Glo-Bus environment.

VIII. Grade Computation and Scale

Your final grade in this course will be broken down according to the components described above and the weightings shown below, and will be converted to an alpha-numeric final grade according to the scale shown below. Please note that letter grades are only assigned to final averages.

Assignments	% of final grade	points
Exams (3 @ 10% each)	30	300
Case Analysis (3 parts @ 15% each)	45	450
Participation and professionalism	10	100
Business strategy game	15	150
Totals	100	1000

If your final average is at least…	…but less than…	…your grade is
90	∞	A
80	90	B
70	80	C
60	70	D
0	60	F

Grade Curves

Although grade adjustments in my classes are rare, I reserve the right to adjust (or not adjust) course grades, at my discretion. Adjustments are considered only for final grades, and not for individual assignments. Please do not contact me to request an adjustment unless you believe I have made an evaluation error and have written documentation to support your argument. Any discretionary adjustments on my part will be uniformly applied to all students in the course. Notwithstanding the above, please note that it is usual policy to round up individual final averages using .50 as a cutoff (i.e., a 79.50 final average is a B, but a 79.49 is a C).

IX. Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University—Central Texas expects all students to maintain high standards of honor in personal and scholarly conduct. Any deviation from this expectation may result in a minimum of a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. All academic dishonesty concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact me before taking a course of action. More information can be found at http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/studentconduct/academicintegrity.php.
(statement updated Summer 2014)

X. Disabilities Support and Access

At Texas A&M University – Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to an education that is barrier-free. The Office of Disability Support and Access is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability enjoy equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. Some aspects of this course or the way the course is taught may present barriers to learning due to a disability. If you feel this is the case, please contact Disability Support and Access at (254) 501-5831 in Warrior Hall, Ste. 212. For more information, please visit their website at www.tamuct.edu/DisabilitySupport. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. (*statement updated Fall 2014*)

XI. Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must go to (or contact) the Records Office and ask for the necessary paperwork. You may also access this information online at http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/registrar/droppolicy.php. Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Records Office will give you a deadline by which the paperwork they give you must be completely filled out, signed, and returned to their office. Once you have returned the completed and signed form(s) to the records office, wait 24 hours before going into Warrior Web to confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If, after the 24 hours, you find that you are still enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the records office immediately. You must continue to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid any penalties for absence. Should you miss the deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course.
(*statement updated Fall 2014*)

XII. Library Services

Just as computer literacy deals with general competency in the use of computers—a necessary skill in a highly technological society like ours—INFORMATION LITERACY focuses on research skills that prepare individuals to live and work in an information-centered society. Librarians are available to work with students in the development of information literacy, and are knowledgeable on many relevant matters including critical reasoning, the ethical use of information, and the appropriate use of secondary research techniques. Librarian services may include, but are not limited to, the following: exploring information resources such as library collections and services, identifying sources such as subject databases and scholarly journals, and executing effective search strategies. Library Resources are outlined and accessed through the following web page: http://www.tamuct.edu/library. The TAMUCT librarians are available to assist distance learning students doing research via email and chat sessions; consult the library link provided here or the library link on the course home page to access these services.
(*statement updated Fall 2014*)

XIII. Syllabus Changes and Errors

Your instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed. You will be advised of any changes with ample notice via Blackboard. Changes can arise from pedagogical necessity or simply from the discovery of an error in the syllabus document itself. If you believe you have found an error (e.g., a scheduling error) or inconsistency in the syllabus or course Blackboard page please notify your instructor immediately.

XIV. Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored include Accounting, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Writing. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Room 111. Visit www.ct.tamus.edu/AcademicSupport and click "Tutoring Support" for tutor schedules and contact info. If you have questions, need to schedule a tutoring session, or if you're interested in becoming a tutor, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-501-5830 or by emailing tutoring@ct.tamus.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMU-CT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in Mathematics, Writing, Career Writing, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Spanish, Calculus, and Statistics. To access Tutor.com, log into your Blackboard account and click "Online Tutoring."
(*statement updated Summer 2014*)

XV. Online Learning

TAMUCT courses incorporate online learning in varying ways and to varying degrees. This course, while primarily lecture based, also includes a significant online component, including online examinations, group collaborations, strategy simulation, and peer evaluation. It is not possible to pass this course without successfully completing the online component.

Appendix: Written Case Analysis Evaluation Rubric

Your written case analyses will be evaluated using the rubric shown below. The left column lists the categories of evaluation I will be considering as I read your cases. The middle column describes each category of evaluation, and may also list the sorts of items that fall within a particular evaluation category. The right column lists the total possible points you can GAIN toward your total assignment grade from a particular evaluation category.

Read this paragraph closely: Note that the assignment of point values to your work may be asymmetrical. What I mean by this is that the number of points you can LOSE by completely failing a particular category is *greater* than the total number of points you can GAIN by completely satisfying the requirements for that same category. The reason for this is that these evaluation categories are not independent of each other: some are foundational for other categories. For example, even though you can only gain 5 points for the use of high-quality, permissible sources, using certain unapproved sources such as student essay websites can void your entire analysis, and will hurt your grade accordingly.

Category of Evaluation	Description of Category	Maximum Points
Punctuation	Correct use of commas, quotation marks, periods, semi-colons, etc.	5
Spelling and Word Usage	Correct spelling of words; correct usage of words	5
Grammar	Correct subject-verb agreement, no vague pronoun references, use of correct voice, no run-on sentences or comma splices, etc.	5
Intelligibility and Expressiveness	Overall comprehensibility of written English: can the reader clearly understand what you are trying to say? And do you say it well?	10
Organization	Effective use of headers and transitions to guide the reader; clear, logical flow of ideas that is consistent with the case assignment outline	10
Integration	Analysis is clearly based on data; recommendations are clearly based on analysis; recommendations are framed and supported by drawing from multiple business disciplines (management, economics, marketing, finance, etc.); abstract and conclusion effectively summarize the analysis; the entire paper hangs together as a cohesive whole	25
Rigor	The analysis displays clear evidence of a high level of student effort; multiple and varied sources have been consulted; the analysis sounds credible and is consistent in quality with senior-level university work; the compiled data are sufficiently voluminous and comprehensive to support the analysis and conclusions	10
Use of Sources	Only high-quality, permissible sources have been consulted; sources have been used appropriately and with sophistication	5
Formatting	All margins, font style/size, headings, citations, bibliographic entries, and any inserted graphics are correct as per the style guide in Blackboard.	5
Use of Course Content	Course terms and frameworks have been correctly applied and utilized in the analysis such that it is clear to the reader that you fully understand them	10
Quality of Thought and Insight	High-level thinking is evident, as is an advanced level of analytic and diagnostic capability; recommendations are compelling and perhaps surprising	10
	TOTAL POINTS:	100